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Is swearing on beings other than Almighty God considered as polytheism?

The real concepts of the terms monotheism and polytheism should be interpreted according to the holy Quran verses and the traditions, because it is the holy Quran and the Prophet's practices that are the best criteria for the distinction of right and wrong, and likewise, monotheism and polytheism.

Therefore, it is worthy to evaluate any thought and behavior through reference to the wake conscience with no prejudice as well as the Logic of revelation and the Prophet's practice.

Now, we point to some of our evident proofs, specifying the permissibility of swearing on none-God from the view of the holy Quran and the Prophet's traditions:

1- The holy Quran swears on some of the phenomena, such as the Prophet's life, mans' soul, the pen as the symbol of writing, the sun, the moon, the stars, night and day, the heaven, the earth, the time, the mounts, and the seas in some of its eternal verses, including,

لعمرك انهم لفي سكرتهم يعمهون¹

(Verily, by our life, in their intoxication, they were wandering blindly.)

و الشمس و ضحيتها والقمر اذا تليها و النهار اذا جليها والليل اذا يغشيها و السماء و ما بنيتها و الارض و ما طحيها و نفس و ما سويها فآلهمها فجورها و تقويها²

1-Hejt Sura, verse no.12

2- Shams Sura, verse no.1-8

3-Najm Sura, verse no.1

(I swear by the Sun and its spreading light. And by the Moon, which follows the sun. And by the Day when it manifests the light of the sun. And by the Night when it covers the day. And by the Sky and the One, who has built it. And by the Earth and the One, who has expended it. And by the Soul and the One, who created it....)

و النجم اذا هوي³ ...

(I swear by the star when it disappears.)

ن ، والقلم و ما يسطرون

(Nun, I swear by the pen and what they writ with it.)⁴

والعصر ان الانسان لفي خسر

(I swear by the era, that man will be indeed in a grave loss.)⁵

والفجر و ليال عشر

(I swear by the dawn. And by the ten Nights [the first ten nights of Zihhajeh month].)⁶

و الطور و كتاب مسطور في رق منشور و البيت المعمور و السقف المرفوع و البحر المسجور

(I swear by the Tur Mount. And by the Book, which is [revealed] and written in a published parchment, by the Bait-Ul-Mamur, and by the lofty roof of the heaven, and by the sea, which is filled with fire.)⁷

4- Galam Sura, verse no. 1

5- Asr Sura, verse no. 1-2

6-Fajr Sura, verse no. 1-2

7- Tur Sura, verse no. 1-6

Also, swearing on the worldly phenomena is witnessed in Nazeat, Morsalat, Boruj, Taregh, Balad, Tin, and Zoha Suras.

It is beyond doubt that if swearing on none-God is as polytheism, the holy Quran as the book of monotheism never does this, while its verses are but a rebuttal to these charges.

2- The Muslims throughout the world have adopted the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendants) as their role model, and his way of life and practice are counted as their criteria for the distinction between right and wrong.

The Muslim researchers and writers have also narrated many cases in which the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendants) has sworn on none-God.

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, the head of Hanabeleh sect, quotes from the Messenger of God as saying,

فلعمري لان نتكلم بمعروف و تنهي عن منكر خير من ان تسكت

(I swear by my soul, it is better to enjoin to good and forbid from evil than being quiet.)⁸

In his book, entitled ‘Sahih’, that is considered ad one of the six authentic books, Moslem Ibn Hajaj has narrated as such:

جاء رجل الي النبي (ص) فقال يا رسول الله اي الصدقه اعظم اجرا؟ فقال: اما و ابيك لتتبانه ان تصدق و انت صحيح شحيح تخشي الفقر و تامل البقاء⁹...

(One asked the holy Prophet (a.s), he replied, “I swear by your father that you will know it, and that is to pay charity when you are healthy and greedy and continue your life with the fear of poverty and hope of a long life.)

8- Mosnad, Ahmad, vol.5, p.224 & 225

9-Sahih, Moslem, section 3, EGYPT edition the book of Zakat, chapter charity, p.93-94

How those who consider the majority of Muslims all over the world as polytheists due to swearing on none-God justify the Prophet's act?

3- In addition to the Divine Book and the Prophet's practice, the manner of the Prophet's disciples bears witness to the permissibility of swearing on none-God.

In some of his sermons, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s) swears on his own soul. For instance:

ولعمري ليضعفن لكم التيه من بعدي اضعافا

(I swear by my life, your deviation will be multiplied after me.)¹⁰

And somewhere else, he stated:

ولعمري لان لم تنزع عن غيك و شفاقك لتعرفنهم عن قليل يطلبونك¹¹

(I swear by my life, if you do not abandon your deviation and adversity, you will recognize the ones who are looking for you.)¹²

It is evident that no reasoning or justification can stand against these authentic and proofs, and no other claims can bring a charge against the holy verses of the Quran, or the Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendants) and his close disciples' practice, such as Imam Ali (a.s) or accuse them to polytheism of dualism.

Conclusion:

10- Nahjul Balaghah (Mohammad Abdah), sermon no. 161

11- Ibid, letter no. 9

12- For further study, refer to sermons no. 198,182,187 and letters no. 6 &54

From the holy Quran verses, the Prophet's practice, and the firm believers' standpoint, it is clarified that swearing on none-God is a certain principle and has no inconsistency with monotheism.

Therefore, if any tradition implicitly contradicts what has been already proven, it should be interpreted so that it agree the certain principles of the holy Quran and traditions.

Now, let us make a reference to one of those ambiguous traditions and then answer to it:

ان رسول الله سمع عمر و ه و يقول : و ابي. فقال ان الله ينهاكم ان تحلفوا بابائكم و من كان حالفا فليحلف بالله او يسكت¹³

(The holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendants) heard Omar swearing by his father. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendants) said, “Verily Allah has banned you from swearing on your fathers, and he who swears, should swear by Allah or remain quiet”.)

Although the authenticity of this tradition cannot be compared with the holy Quran verses and the evident traditions in this regard, however, it can be answered as such: prohibiting Omar and other persons from swearing by their fathers is due to the fact that their fathers were idolaters or pagans, and the pagans or idolaters do not deserve to be sworn by.

13- Sonan Ul-Kobra , vol. 10, p.29; Sonan Nesae, vol.7, p. 4 -5